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HOW OLD IS MAN ?





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# HOW OLD IS MAN?

SOME MISUNDERSTOOD CHAPTERS  
IN SCRIPTURE CHRONOLOGY

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BY

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# HOW OLD IS MAN?

## CHAPTER I

WERE THE SCRIPTURES INTENDED TO PROVIDE  
AN EXACT ANCIENT CHRONOLOGY?

I HAVE long been convinced that the entire subject of Bible Chronology requires to be re-investigated, and I have eagerly desired to see some of our great scholars devoting themselves to the task, and pursuing it with that full and devout acceptance of Scripture testimony from which serviceable results can alone be hoped. That I presume to touch it is entirely due to the accident of my having come upon some facts which will demand consideration in any real investigation of this important problem.

Circumstances led me to study somewhat minutely the eleventh chapter of Genesis,

which contains the chronology of the period between the Flood and the birth of Abraham. This is the section of Bible chronology which presents the greatest difficulty. It appears to extend to only 292 years, and how inadequate this seems to be will be apparent when we recollect that it covers the increase of the family of Noah to the myriads of the new humanity; their slow migration from Armenia to the east of Babylonia; their after-advance into the fertile plains of this latter district; the scattering of the nations; and their settlement throughout the then inhabited world. That settlement was evidently not a thing of yesterday, when Abraham passed from Ur to Haran, travelled through Canaan, and went down into Egypt. One naturally asks whether it is possible that all this can be covered by less than three centuries. And when we study the Bible narrative itself, that question is forced anew upon us. We read that "Noah lived after the flood 350 years" (Gen. ix. 28). Now, if Abraham was born 292 years after the Deluge

he must have been contemporary with Noah for 58 years. But there is not the slightest indication of Noah's presence in those later times. On the contrary, the impression made upon the reader of these early chapters in Genesis is that the Flood was already a remote event in the time of Abraham. Pleasure, therefore, mingled largely with surprise when further study led to the conclusion that we had hitherto misread our documents, and that the real interval was about 1600 years instead of the almost universally accepted 292.

Another conclusion suggested the important question which heads this chapter. The Bible deals, and deals very specially, with chronological figures. But if the Bible uses these figures for other than a merely chronological purpose, and we nevertheless persist in seeing in them merely an ancient chronology, our folly must have lamentable results. We shall inevitably make mistakes, and we shall quarrel with our authority. On the other hand, if we first ascertain what the purpose



of the Scripture really is, we may find it serve us most helpfully also in matters that are merely chronological. Now, there is one fact which bears heavily against the assumption upon which our treatment of the Scripture figures has hitherto been based. *There is no recognised era in the Bible reckoning.* Once we find a date reckoned from Israel's coming "out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings vi. 1). But this is the only instance in which the Exodus is regarded as a national era, although it would be hard to name one that was more appropriate. The Scripture is equally silent with regard to other possible eras. The creation of Adam, for instance, presented a starting-point which a mere chronologist could hardly have neglected in dealing with primeval history. But, with the exception of the statement that Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old, no event is dated from the advent of humanity.

Other great dividing lines are similarly ignored. Events in Israelitish history might have been fitly reckoned from the conquest of

Canaan, or from the founding of the Hebrew monarchy either under Saul or David. But neither of these outstanding events is adopted as a national era. The New Testament might have reckoned from the birth, the death, or the resurrection of our Lord, or from that eventful Pentecost which followed. There is not the slightest reference to them, however, for this purpose. That neither the Old Testament nor the New should so use any of these events is a fact which a Bible student is compelled to ponder. If the Scripture had been intended to furnish us with a mere chronology—if it had in view only a record of the lapse of years—when it supplied the numbers which we value, then it seems hardly possible that none of those starting-points should have been utilised.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SCRIPTURE RECKONINGS

FURTHER study does not confirm our confidence either in the results or in the basis of the accepted chronology. Let us ask the reader to note—

#### I.—THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE EXODUS AND THE FOUNDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

We are told (1 Kings vi. 1) that "it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord." This, as has been already said, seems to be the only instance in which the Exodus era is used for the

dating of a subsequent event in Israelitish history ; but there is a striking peculiarity in these figures. Paul, speaking in the Jewish synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, reminds his audience of God's persistent purpose to bless Israel. "About the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. . . . And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king ; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king" (18-22).

Following this later enumeration, we have

The sojourn in the wilderness . . .	40 years.
The period of the Judges (including Samuel) . . . . .	450 "
The reign of Saul . . . . .	40 "
To these we add: the reign of David	40 "
The years of Solomon's reign completed before the building of the Temple	3 "
<hr/>	
In all	573 years.

Here, then, the identical period described in the Old Testament as extending over 480 years is said in the New Testament to have really extended to 573 years. Various devices have been tried to clear away the difficulty. Others, again, despairing of loosening the knot, have cut it, and it has been proposed, for instance, to regard the 480 in 1 Kings vi. 1 as an interpolation! If, however, it is not the purpose of the Scripture in either place to give us a merely chronological reckoning, this very difference in the figures may be intentional. Turning first of all to the statement in Kings, it is incredible that the Israelites could have been so ignorant of their past history that they did not know how many years had elapsed between the Exodus and the founding of the Temple. Whether the correct number was 480 or 573 they must have been perfectly aware of the fact. Say that the correct interval was 573 years, is it possible that the Scripture conveyed any lesson by blotting out the difference of 93 years and describing the interval as having



embraced only 480? This, considering that the Scripture was written from first to last with the distinct and never-forgotten intention to convey instruction, is a perfectly legitimate question.

But could these 93 years lend themselves in any way to such a purpose? Bible students have furnished a somewhat startling reply. Six periods in all are numbered and chronicled in the Book of Judges, during which the Israelites were subjugated to a foreign yoke in their own land. God had abandoned them and had given place to other lords who crushed His people under a cruel mastery. Now it might be entirely possible that the lesson of that abandonment of His people had not yet been learned, and that this was a most appropriate moment for recalling and enforcing it. In regard to one of the six periods we are informed that the servitude extended only to the two and a half tribes on the east of the Jordan (Judges x. 8). This servitude, seeing that it did not affect the entire people, we may leave out of the account.

What, then, of the remaining five, which did affect the entire people? The following passages tell the story and the duration of each of those subjugations.

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Wherefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathayim (iii. 7, 8) . . . . 8 years.

“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord. . . . So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab (12-14) . . . . 18 „

Other lapses into idolatry followed and were similarly punished. The Israelites served—

Jabin and Sisera (iv. 3)	. 20 „
The Midianites (vi. 1)	. 7 „
The Philistines (xiii. 1)	. 40 „

---

In all, exactly 93 years.

It will be felt that this result comes with something of the force of a demonstration. These 93 years clearly belong to a special

category. They summed up the times of national humiliation and servitude; and one would imagine that as a whole they must have been remembered by Israel. But is anything said in Kings which would be emphasised by their suppression? We have only to turn to the message to Solomon to find the answer. The mention of the 480 years and the references to the building are simply the introduction to the following Divine communication. The message runs thus: "Concerning this house which thou art in building—if thou wilt walk in my statutes and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: **AND I WILL DWELL AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND WILL NOT FORSAKE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL**" (12, 13). This is a distinct covenant between God and Israel. The mere building of the Temple would not ensure God's presence and favour. But if the royal authority will continue in loyal and loving subjection to God, then will He dwell

among His people Israel and not forsake them. Could anything be more effective, as an enforcement of this warning, than the blotting out of those 93 years in which God had been compelled to abandon His people ? Israel's true life is life in fellowship with God. The years that are not so lived are thrown away. In Acts, on the other hand, emphasis is laid upon God's long continued forbearance with an unfaithful and gainsaying people ; and there, accordingly, the entire period of 573 years is recorded.

If the foregoing explanation is well-founded, it follows that the Scripture use of that number 480 is not a merely chronological one. The number is symbolical ; and the Scripture uses a chronological difficulty to impress a lesson which it was of the utmost moment that Israel should learn.

We meet another illustration of this in

## II.—THE GENEALOGY OF OUR LORD IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

It will be noted that the Evangelist directs special attention to the genealogy. He men-

tions that it is in three divisions; and that each division consists of fourteen generations. "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations" (i. 17).

This statement seems at first sight to exclude all difficulty. But, as a matter of fact, it has chained the Christian Church to a difficulty of a very distinct and long enduring kind. The division follows the great landmarks in Israelitish history: (1) the period from Abraham to the founding of the Israelitish kingdom under David, whose wars established Israel's independence; (2) the period of the monarchy from Solomon, who entered upon the inheritance secured by the wars of David, until the final overthrow of the monarchy and the commencement of the long continued subjection of the Jewish people; and (3) from the extinction of the monarchy to Christ. The lines of division



are thus clearly marked; and for the first two sections the lists of names are in complete agreement with the numbers given in verse 17.

(1) Abraham.	(1) Solomon.
(2) Isaac.	(2) Roboam.
(3) Jacob.	(3) Abia.
(4) Judas.	(4) Asa.
(5) Phares.	(5) Josaphat.
(6) Esrom.	(6) Joram.
(7) Aram.	(7) Ozias.
(8) Aminadab.	(8) Joatham.
(9) Naason,	(9) Achaz.
(10) Salmon.	(10) Ezekias.
(11) Boaz.	(11) Manasses.
(12) Obed.	(12) Amon.
(13) Jesse.	(13) Josias.
(14) David.	(14) Jechonias.

But now comes trouble. The third fourteen, though said to be also there, could not be found. The names are these :

(1) Salathiel.	(8) Eliud.
(2) Zorobabel.	(9) Eleazar.
(3) Abiud.	(10) Matthan.
(4) Eliakim.	(11) Jacob.
(5) Azor.	(12) Joseph.
(6) Sadoc.	(13) Christ.
(7) Achim.	

Various devices have been tried to make this last list extend to 14. Jechonias has been reckoned twice; once as closing the second period, and again as commencing the third. Others have followed the same course with David, reckoning his name at the end of the first list and also at the beginning of the second. As to why these names have had this exceptional treatment, only one reason is discoverable. It is necessary to secure one more name to make the three fourteens, and so one name is made to do duty for two. But, in confronting us with the difficulty, does not the Word of God shut us up to the necessity of embracing a fourteenth name in the list which we might otherwise pass over? The perfect completeness of the two first sections shows that the missing name must be somewhere in the third list. When we scan this carefully, we note that in verse 16 there is a sudden and significant change in the usual phraseology of the chapter. The genealogy begins: "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob," &c. This is continued

up to the commencement of verse 16, where we read, "and Jacob begat Joseph." But from that point the customary phrase is dispensed with. We do not read: "Joseph begat Jesus who is called Christ." We find these words instead: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." Joseph, by this suppression of the usual formula, is excluded, and his name is added, but only in conjunction with that of another—of Mary.

The reader of Scripture learns to attach significance to a change like this. The ordinary phrase is dropped, *because in this case it will not apply*. Joseph is the adoptive, not the natural, father of Jesus, receiving Him as God's gift, and investing Him with his rights as representative of the House of David. But the real link in the chain of natural descent is "Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Through Mary's relation to Joseph as his espoused wife, the Christ enters this branch of the Royal House. By drawing our attention to the number 14, the Scripture leads

us to follow the hint which is here given, and to *add the name of Mary* to the genealogy. The three last links in the genealogy are, therefore,

(12) Joseph.

(13) Mary.

(14) Christ.

“It will be noticed,” says Lange in his Commentary, “that the third division contains only thirteen generations. . . . By this Matthew evidently intended to indicate that the name of Mary was here to be inserted in the genealogy.” If the reader accepts this conclusion, he will note again that a difficulty is made use of to arrest the student, while hints are given (both in the number 14 and through the dropping in Joseph’s case of the usual phrase) which may lead him to the solution. In the solution thus found, the truth of the Virgin-birth of our Lord, “the seed of *the woman*” (Gen. iii. 15), comes upon the reader with the surprise and the delight of a personal discovery.

But this genealogy has several instructive peculiarities. It will be noticed that the names

of other four women are given. These are Tamar (verse 3), Rachab, Ruth (verse 5), and "her that had been the wife of Urias" (verse 6), namely, Bathsheba. Two of these were Gentiles; the other two were women whose names had been covered with reproach. Yet all four were made ancestresses of the Christ! We notice once more the marvellous reticence of the Scripture. Not a word is used to enforce, or even to state, the lesson that there is mercy, full acceptance, and even highest glory, for Gentiles and for sinners in Israel. It is manifestly felt that a mere hint is best. The mention of the names will be enough for him "who *meditates* on God's law day and night." It will make him pause and consider; and then the truth will flash out upon him like a star.

A third and last point is the statement in verse 8: "And Joram begat Ozias." This, as we know from the Old Testament, is not by any means a complete statement of the links in the royal genealogy. Joram, or Jehoram, was not the father but the great-great-grandfather



of Uzziah, or Ozias. The full genealogy is as follows :—

Jehoram.

Ahaziah.

Joash.

Amaziah.

Uzziah.

(See 2 Chron. xxii.-xxiv.) The names of these three kings — Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah — are, for some reason or other, *blotted out*. Can we say why these are not in this register of the ancestors of Jesus? There is no statement in Matthew which furnishes or suggests a reply. The words (“The generations . . . from David until the carrying into Babylon are fourteen generations”), verse 17, show that the names have been fully considered, that none have “fallen out” (as some theologians are so fond of saying), and that none have been omitted through oversight. The omission, then, is intentional and deliberate. When that conclusion is reached, our next question is—what lay behind that decision: why were the names left out? We immedi-

ately begin to search for a reason. We turn to the Old Testament records, and we discover that these kings were children of Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, who mounted the throne of Judah, as her mother had mounted the throne of Israel. These descendants of Jezebel walked in her ways, and sought to uproot the worship of Jehovah. As the student meditates, another truth flashes out star-like. The Lord is a God of judgment as well as a God of mercy. He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations *of them that hate Him*. Those who followed the traditions of an evil house perished with it. The names of Jezebel's descendants, who prolonged her influence and sought to complete her evil work, are blotted out with hers. They have neither part nor lot in the Redeemer of Israel, or in the glory which He brings. Here, then, for the third time in the brief compass of these seventeen verses, a difficulty in the genealogy marks the place where a great truth lies waiting to be discovered. It is easy to miss it. We have

only to be content with some airy explanation that is really an insult to the Bible. But it is easy also to find it. Child-like confidence in the Scripture, and patient, persistent search will rejoice as in the finding of great spoil.

### III.—SAUL'S AGE AND REIGN.

In 1 Samuel xiii. 1, 2 (Authorised Version) we read: "Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel." In the margin we find for "reigned one year" the alternative translation "the son of one year in his reigning." The Revised Version is startling in its divergence. There the passage runs as follows: "Saul was (*thirty*) years old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years over Israel. And Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel." To the word "thirty," which it puts as a parenthesis and prints in italics, it appends this marginal note: "The Hebrew has, *Saul was a year old*. The whole verse is omitted in the unrevised Septuagint,

but in a later recension the number *thirty* is inserted." This is a typical instance of the daring and the deficiencies of the Revised Version. It actually ventures to change the text; and upon what is the venture based? Upon a confessedly late addition to the Septuagint translation! But if its alteration of the text is wanton, the attempted justification in its marginal note is atrocious. And this is not a solitary instance. The ordinary reader is frequently embarrassed, while the scholar is irritated, by unweighed and not seldom highly questionable statements. Why speak of the "unrevised Septuagint"? Is it to suggest that the translation by the Seventy was published in the form of a first draft from the translators' pens? that no due care was exercised by individual translators, and that no consultation was held and no oversight was practiced by those who had this most important work in hand? And what, pray, is the authority of this "later recension," which presumed to introduce the word "thirty"? Is it anything more than a note appended to a Greek manu-

script? And yet, upon a chance emendation of this sort, which has never claimed even a shadow of authority, the Revisers venture, not only to step aside from every other Version, but even to alter the Hebrew text itself! In this way, whatever significance the Scripture statement possessed is obliterated so far as the influence of the Revised Version extends; and the Divine intention which it served has been, unintentionally I willingly admit, but none the less effectually, frustrated.

The omission of the verse from the Septuagint indicates that the Hebrew text ran then as it runs now. For it plainly implies that the passage presented so formidable a difficulty to the Seventy that it seemed wiser to them to omit the verse than to place a huge stumbling-block of this kind in the path of Greek readers, to whom the Jewish translators naturally desired to commend the Scriptures. Jerome found the same Hebrew text, and loyally rendered it: "*Filius unius anni erat Saul cum regnare cœpisset, duobis autem annis regnavit super Israel;*" that is, "Saul was

the son of one year when he began to reign, and for two years he reigned over Israel." Luther's version reads: "*Saul war ein Jahr König gewesen, und da er zwei Jahre über Israel regiert hatte, erwählte er ihm drei tausend mann aus Israel;*" "Saul had been king one year; and, when he had reigned two years over Israel, he chose him three thousand men out of Israel." Our Authorised Version renders similarly: "Saul reigned one year: and, when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel." But both Luther's rendering and that of our own Authorised are attempts to explain a difficulty, and neither of them is successful. For, as the reader will see, the difficulty still remains. Why should we be told that Saul had reigned one year? And over whom had he reigned that year? Besides, too, both versions are hopelessly faulty as translations. The Hebrew is simple, direct, and perfectly coherent. The phrase, "The son of a year," can mean nothing else than that *Saul was one year old*. It is, as every

Hebrew student knows, the form commonly used in the statement of age. Where we find in Gen. v. 32, that "Noah was five hundred years old," the Hebrew reads: "And Noah was the son of five hundred years." So Gen. xxi. 5, "And Abraham was an hundred years old," is, in the Hebrew, "And Abraham was the son of a hundred years." It is the usual formula also for stating a king's age at his accession to the throne. In 2 Sam. ii. 10 the Hebrew, "The son of forty years (was) Ishbosheth, Saul's son, at his reigning over Israel," is very properly rendered in our version: "Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel." This, as I have said, is the usual form; and there is no doubt whatever that the only correct translation of 1 Sam. xiii. 1 is as follows: "Saul was a year old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years over Israel."

This brings us back, however, to the difficulty which the translators have attempted to clear away. It is twofold. We read in



Acts xiii. that Saul reigned forty years, while here it is stated that he reigned two. The latter statement is also plainly at variance with the history given in Samuel. Saul was not only upon the throne, but he had also been rejected by God, when Samuel was sent to anoint David, then a mere lad. But David was thirty years old at Saul's death, and Saul was king till he died. It is perfectly plain, therefore, that Saul must have reigned longer than two years. The other difficulty is still more stupendous. For what possible meaning, it will be asked, can the words have, which describe him as a year old when he ascended the throne? We know that he was already a young man when, as a private individual, he had his first interview with Samuel, and was informed of the greatness to which he was destined.

The difficulties, then, are undoubted; and a reverent student of the Scripture will not be above asking whether they are designed. Is there any vital truth indicated by the first statement, for example, that Saul was just one

year old when his reign commenced? We go back upon his history recorded in the preceding chapters; and we are at once struck by the fact that Saul was the subject of *two* elections, or, as we might describe them, two coronations. He was appointed king first of all at Mizpeh (1 Sam. x. 17-24). While the lot was being taken, Saul, knowing from the prophetic intimation formerly given him by Samuel upon whom it was likely to fall, had "hid himself among the stuff." "And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king" (verses 23-24).

After this election Saul went quietly home again. Only a slender following announced the change which had taken place. Then came the call from the men of Jabesh-Gilead; Saul's summons to Israel; the assembling of

330,000 men at Bezek; and the absolute rout of the Ammonites, "So that two of them were not left together" (xi. 11). The victory, as well as the decision and intrepidity which had summoned and led them against the foe, roused the enthusiasm of the Israelitish army. "Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" (verses 14, 15).

This seems to be the point at which Saul's reign really began. But what can we make of the statement that he was only one year old when he began to reign, and of the apparent resolve to acknowledge only two years of the subsequent thirty-nine during which he sat upon the throne of Israel? That he was literally only an infant of twelve months, when he was crowned either at Mizpeh or at Gilgal, is an explanation of the words which is,

on the face of it, utterly inadmissible, to say nothing of an infant of twelve months being represented as "higher than any of the people from his shoulders, and upward"! It is equally evident, nevertheless, that the statement would never have been made, unless it pointed to some important lesson which the Divine Teacher would have us learn from this man's story. Did anything happen to him a year before he entered upon his actual reign which formed a new era in his life, and gave it, as it were, a fresh beginning? And whatever his new experience was, did it last only three years in all, and terminate with the close of his second year's active reign?

When the problem is presented in this way it is not hard to find the solution. When we are compelled by this difficulty to search the Scripture, we find that Saul's first meeting with Samuel led to just such a change in Saul's life as is here indicated. The Seer, in sending him on his way, announced to him various incidents which would happen in the course of that day's journey. These succes-

sive fulfilments no doubt impressed Saul with a new conviction of God's reality and nearness. In connection with the third of these—the meeting with a company of prophets—a special promise was given: “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be *turned into another man*” (1 Sam. x. 6). This prediction was also fulfilled. “And it was so,” the Scripture continues, “that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, *God gave him another heart*: and all those signs came to pass that day” (verse 9).

The radical character of the change in Saul is emphasised by what we are told of the astonishment of “all that knew him beforetime.” They “said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” (verse 11). The proper answer was indicated by the reply which, if we may judge from the variations in the versions, has proved to be another “Scripture difficulty” from ancient times. “And one of the same place answered and said, but who is

their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets" (verse 12)? The meaning of the words seems really to lie upon the surface. The question, "But who is their father?" plainly points to the prophets. Who touched *their* hearts? Who turned *them* into the men they were, and led them to abandon everything for God's praise and service? Is He not able to change Saul also? The speaker points to these moral miracles as the explanation of what they now witnessed in their old acquaintance and friend. But what we have to note is the testimony that is borne here to the change which was wrought in Saul. It was unquestionable and great. All were compelled to take knowledge of it. He had so veritably become "another man," that, when some similar moral transformation afterwards occurred, the saying sprang unbidden to the lips: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" And now, when we put our question again, as to whether anything had happened to form a new era in Saul's life, is it not already answered? On that memorable day

the old Saul had disappeared, and a new Saul commenced his career.

That the change was not one of mere temporary emotion, but that it touched his character and marked the man and his surroundings for some time at least, is plain from the affection which was manifested towards him by some, and from the contempt which was poured upon him by others. After his election as king at Mizpeh, he assumed no state, but returned to his former employments. His attitude was evidently that of quiet waiting upon God. This affected the people in various ways. "And Samuel," we read, "sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace" (verses 25-27). That self-restraint was probably as new to Saul as his prophesying among the prophets. It was succeeded at the right moment by



action of such a kind, that it surrounded the new throne with the enthusiastic love of the people. The messengers of Jabesh-Gilead had told the men of Saul's town of the fearful fate which threatened them; and, when Saul returned, driving his oxen before him from the fields, he came into the midst of weeping and lamentation. The case of Jabesh-Gilead was terrible; and, in the view of the people, it was also hopeless. For what could poor Israel do, or Saul the despised? But in a moment all was changed. The king's messengers were rushing from Gibeah along every pathway. They bore to all Israel an imperious command, in every syllable of which throbbed the spirit of the new hero. Suddenly invested with a glory such as even Israel had seldom witnessed, he marshalled his men, and in the dimness of the early morning hurled them against the masses of the foe. We have already noted the tremendous overthrow of the Ammonites. But it is in the light of these events that we have to read the words which come at the end of the recital: "Saul was one year old when he

began to reign; and he reigned two years over Israel" (xiii. 1).

The meaning seems now to be unmistakable. Saul's new era had endured one year when the battle was fought in Jabesh-Gilead and his actual reign began; and the new era lasted for other two years. Saul then lapsed, and was no longer the man whom God, through the outputting of a miraculous power which made men marvel, had prepared to shepherd His people Israel. He had not only grieved, he had also quenched, the Spirit. The remainder of that reign and the previous part of Saul's life were alike blotted out from God's record. And why? Plainly that the lesson might be inscribed upon the very foundation of the Israelitish monarchy, that only a man of "another heart" can be king over God's Israel. That truth was emphasised in the after history, when God declared that He had prepared Him a man after His own heart to take the place of the discarded Saul. But it surely had nowhere grander expression than in this huge chronological difficulty!

And if it is felt that the intention to impress that truth must be admitted, we shall feel ourselves compelled to go farther. It will no longer be disputable that chronological statements are sometimes used in the Scripture to arrest the reader's attention, and to impress some vital truth. It will be equally clear also that no scruple is entertained at throwing the chronological statement into a form, which constitutes a very serious difficulty for a Bible student. The very seriousness of the difficulty, however, is only the expression of the Spirit's earnest desire that the attention of the readers should be excited, that the truth should be searched for, and that it should be found, felt, and everlastingly remembered.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GENEALOGIES OF GENESIS

THE foregoing instances reveal a use of chronological references which is peculiar to the Scriptures, but which is nevertheless quite intelligible in view of the purpose of the Bible to convey spiritual instruction. We shall now turn to those chapters in Genesis upon which our present ancient chronology is based. And here it will be admitted that foundations of such vast importance as these ought to be surveyed with the utmost care, and that nothing should be built upon them which they are not fitted to sustain.

Let me ask the reader to notice

#### I.—THE NUMBERS IN THE GENEALOGIES OF GENESIS ARE CONFINED TO THE DIVINELY SELECTED LINES.

There are several peculiarities in the early

chronology of Scripture to which I have lately drawn attention,<sup>1</sup> and which have led to my noticing the facts which I shall by-and-by place before the reader. Here, as elsewhere, it is plainly not the purpose of Scripture merely to give us a chronology in the sense in which that term is ordinarily understood. We know nothing, for instance, as to what lapse of time divided the generations of the Cainites from each other (see Gen. iv.). We are informed of the order of their succession, but not a word is said of their chronology. The genealogies in these cases run thus: "And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech" (Gen. iv. 18). We search that genealogy from its beginning to its close and never encounter a single number. As to the years of each generation and the space of time which the whole covered there is absolute silence. This part of the record, for anything we can discover, might have

<sup>1</sup> "How to Read the Bible" (Marshall Brothers, London), pp. 195-221.

belonged to a time when numbers had as yet not been thought of, or when, at least, they had not been applied to measure the duration of human existence.

But when we come to the following chapter (Gen. v.), we encounter the most perfect system of reckoning exhibited in any literature. We read, for example, in verses 6-8: "And Seth lived an hundred and five years and begat Enos: and Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died." Here we have:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| (1) The patriarch's age when his<br>eldest son was born . . . . . | 105 years. |
| (2) How long he lived after that<br>event . . . . .               | 807 „      |
| (3) The entire duration of his earthly<br>life . . . . .          | 912 „      |

Mistake might have crept into the first or into the second of these numbers, and there might have been nothing to betray the fact that transcribers had erred. But a check is

herewith provided, which will keep the figures correct to the end of time. The sum of the two periods—of the years lived before the birth of the first-born and of those lived after that event—is given separately. Thus, by that number 912, we are able to say whether the other two figures—each of them, as we shall eventually see, vitally important—have been correctly transmitted.

That is the pattern of this entire genealogy from Adam to Noah. When Genesis was written men were apparently as much at home in numbers as they are now. The silence in chapter iv. is not to be explained, therefore, by the later origin, or the later perfecting, of chronological ideas. But if that is not the explanation of the silence there, how are we to explain it? Is there any distinction between the two sets of names which account for the presence of chronological reckoning in the second series of names and for its absence from the first series? That question becomes increasingly urgent when we remark that this careful reckoning on the one hand



and that utter silence on the other are marked characteristics of the entire Book of Genesis. In chapter x. we find a register of the "families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood" (verse 32). But not a single chronological note can we discover in the entire list. The following is the pattern after which the whole is arranged: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah" (verses 2-3), &c. Here again, so far as any intimation is given, chronology might never have been heard of, and numbers themselves might not have been invented. Even the Shemites, taken generally as a distinct branch of the human family, are arranged in the same utter silence as to any consciousness of the lapse of years. The genealogy runs in the same fashion: "The children of Shem; Elam and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram;

Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Nash" (verses 22-23), &c. Even with this favoured race there is the same apparent regardlessness of the lapse of time. Is there any explanation?

The explanation can hardly be missed when we scan the following chapter. We note that, after the confusion of tongues at Babylon and the dispersion of the nations, a new selection is made. Shem is taken; and his "generations" are repeated—but with a difference. In this new list the names of *all* the descendants are not entered. One alone in a generation is given—the selected individual—the ancestor of the Christ, that second and greater Noah of humanity. This restriction to one individual is continued till we come to Terah and Abram. And now *in the line of Divine selections* the numbers reappear. Naturally one's attention is attracted by the repetition of Shem's genealogy; and we are still more impressed when we observe that it follows a Divine judgment upon our race. The evident reading of the facts is, that God was now letting the nations go for a time, and that

out of the mass of humanity, He has selected a special line through which Divine grace may by-and-by visit and gather His scattered ones. Having noticed this, we turn back to the preceding sections, for it occurs to us that it is well to ascertain whether anything of a similar kind had happened there. We discover that there is an exact parallel. Cain, after the murder of his brother, separates from God. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (iv. 16). We are afterwards told of the establishment and growth of the Cainites (iv. 16-24). God now, therefore, selects a new line in Seth, and from each generation of Seth's descendants a fresh representative is chosen till we come to Noah, who receives the seed of all life and bears it over the whelming waters in safety till it is sent forth into a cleansed earth. It is here in this line of Seth, as we have already noticed, that the first chronology of our race appears (chap. v.). The years are carefully numbered, and are, in this most ancient section, guarded with very special care. Not

only, as has been already remarked, is the patriarch's age given at the birth of his eldest son, and the number of years he lived after that event, but also the sum of the two numbers, so presenting us with an independent statement of the entire duration of the patriarch's life. The withholding of any time reckoning from those lines by which the Divine purpose is not directly served, and this most careful enumeration of years in those lines in which that purpose is served, show how the eyes of God rest upon His heritage. It is like the reckoning of the great Creative Days in Gen. i.-iii. God has put His hand here also to a work which He will perfect, though the sweep of His purpose embrace a thousand generations. The numbering marks the advancing step of this Divine plan which divides the ages, and along which alone true progress runs.

The student of Genesis will find that the distinction which is here noted pervades all the genealogies. The next is that of Ishmael (xxv. 12-18). We are told how old Ishmael

was when he died (verse 17); but there is no enumeration whatever in connection with his posterity. The list reads thus: "These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth, and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa," &c. As soon, however, as we come to the "generations of Isaac," the next selected line, the numbering reappears: "And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac was forty years old, when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian" (verses 19, 20), &c. Similarly, in "the generations of Esau," the long list of which occupies the whole of chapter xxxvi., there is not one note of time. Various epochs are indicated in the story of the Edomites. They had their patriarchs, and their dukes, and, last of all, their kings. But we are not told when these *régimes* began, nor how long any one of them lasted. There is utter silence in regard to numbers throughout

the entire genealogy; and the omission shows how far it is from the intention of the Scripture to present us with a world-chronology. But in "the generations of Jacob" we once more encounter the enumeration: "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren" (chapter xxxvii. 2), &c. In the formation of our chronology it is, therefore, vain for us to seek for dates outside the selected lines. It is from these alone that the Scripture supplies all the material which has been worked up into the various Biblical systems which have solicited the approval of the learned world; and that fact ought long ago to have warned Bible students. In dealing with these numbers we are not handling a mere chronology, any more than, in investigating the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, we should have been handling mere wood, or gold, or silver, or brass. The figures here are touched and moulded and planned by the hand of the great Artificer. They are filled with typical significance. And, just as everything on which mind has impressed

itself speaks to our intelligence, so these numbers carry the message of God.

## II.—THE VARIATIONS OF THE VERSIONS.

What part, at least, of that message is we shall afterwards see. Meanwhile, there is another preliminary matter which claims our attention. It is well known that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament which was made at Alexandria about 280 B.C., contains some important variations in regard to the numbers with which we shall have to deal. The effect of the variations in the Greek translation is to lengthen very considerably the intervals between the creation of man and the Flood, and between the Flood and the birth of Abraham. The Septuagint adds about 600 years to the former and nearly 800 to the latter. These prolongations have been by no means unwelcome to distressed Christian chronologists; and, even where the Greek numbers have not been accepted, they have been referred to as throwing deep sha-



dows of uncertainty over the genuineness of the narrower numbers in the present Hebrew text. But as it is impossible to make any progress in this investigation unless we are certain as to the correctness of the figures with which we have to deal, we must first of all see what the bearing of these differences really is. There is also another witness, and one, too, which is older, and therefore still more important, than the Septuagint. This witness we must also call. I refer to the Samaritan Pentateuch. There is reason to believe that this dates, notwithstanding the recent tendency to depreciate its age, from the end of the eighth, or the beginning of the seventh, century B.C., and that, consequently, it shows us the state of the Hebrew text four centuries before the Septuagint came into existence. In any case, however, its testimony is much earlier than that of the Greek version; and it is of special value, seeing that it is not a translation, but a copy in the same language as that of the Hebrew text.

In order that the reader may see at a glance what this threefold testimony is, I ask his attention to the following Tables:—

1. *The Patriarch's Age at the Birth of the Son named in the Genealogy.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Adam . . . .	130	130	230
Seth . . . .	105	105	205
Enos . . . .	90	90	190
Cainan . . . .	70	70	170
Mahalaleel . . . .	65	65	165
Jared . . . .	162	62	162
Enoch . . . .	65	65	165
Methuselah . . . .	187	67	167 <sup>1</sup>
Lamech . . . .	182	53	188
Noah (age at Flood) .	600	600	600
	1656	1307	2242

Before we proceed to remark upon the above figures, it will be well to have all the facts before us. There are other two numbers given with each of those names: let us note how it has fared with these also:—

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<sup>1</sup> Other copies of the Septuagint give 187 and 165.

2. *Number of Years lived by each of the Patriarchs after the Son named in the Genealogy was born.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Adam . . . .	800	800	700
Seth . . . .	807	807	707
Enos . . . .	815	815	715
Cainan . . . .	840	840	740
Mahalaleel . . . .	830	830	730
Jared . . . .	800	785	800
Enoch . . . .	300	300	200
Methuselah . . . .	782	653	802 <sup>1</sup>
Lamech . . . .	595	600	565
Noah (500 years old at birth of Shem) . }	450	450	450

3. *The Total Number of Years lived.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Adam . . . .	930	930	930
Seth . . . .	912	912	912
Enos . . . .	905	905	905
Cainan . . . .	910	910	910
Mahalaleel . . . .	895	895	895
Jared . . . .	962	847	962
Enoch . . . .	365	365	365
Methuselah . . . .	969	720	969
Lamech . . . .	777	653	753
Noah . . . .	950	950	950

<sup>1</sup> Other copies of the Septuagint have 782.

The figures shown in this last Table are remarkable. In seven out of the ten instances the numbers are identical in all three authorities. In other words, in these seven cases the Samaritan and the Septuagint have handed on through all these centuries the identical numbers found in the Hebrew. That is a fact which deserves special consideration, in view of the statements so frequently, and I may add rashly, made regarding the alleged corruptions of the Hebrew text. In two cases out of the remaining three, the Hebrew is borne out by the Septuagint. These are Jared 962 and Methuselah 969. In each of these instances the Samaritan gives a smaller number, Jared 847 and Methuselah 720. It is difficult and indeed hazardous to account for these variations. But it seems plain that for some reason the Samaritan wished to reduce the interval between Adam and the Flood. A century (see Table 1) is omitted in the age of Jared at the birth of his first-born; 120 in the case of Methuselah; and 129 in that of Lamech; amounting in all to 349 years, the difference between the 1656

years of the Hebrew and the 1307 years of the Samaritan. To make Methuselah and also Lamech end their years with the Flood, an alteration of the Hebrew numbers was necessary in Table 3. This event falls, according to the Samaritan alterations, 720 years after the birth of Methuselah, and 653 after the birth of Lamech. Thus :—

Methuselah begets Lamech at . . .	67
Lamech begets Noah at . . .	53
The Flood occurs when Noah is . . .	600
	<hr/>
	720

These numbers had consequently to be inserted as the entire life-period of each of those patriarchs. We shall recur to this matter again, and we shall then be able to suggest a probable motive for these changes in the Samaritan text.

It is plain, then, that in nine out of the ten statements, the Hebrew numbers are upheld. The only exception is in the case of Lamech, where the numbers differ in all three authorities. Lamech dies at the age of 777, five years before the Flood, according to the

Hebrew text. The Samaritan gives 653, and the Septuagint 753. The "53" in each of the two last might seem to tell against the "77" of the Hebrew. It opens the way for the allegation that the Greek translator read 753 and not 777 in his Hebrew copy. But if we were to adopt that suggestion, we should shut out of view the broad facts of the case. In not a single instance is either the Samaritan or the Septuagint sustained by a second authority when either of them differs from the Hebrew. This is most important, and, perhaps we might say, final. The Hebrew is in every instance, except that of Lamech, sustained by a second authority. In this instance we have all three at variance; but, when we settle upon other grounds the question of relative accuracy, there can be no question that the verdict must be given here also for the Hebrew text. The agreement of the Samaritan and the Septuagint in regard to the 53 may have been an accident, or it may have been one of the after adjustments, to which, as we shall see, the Septuagint was subjected.

The lessened period assigned by the Samaritan to the interval between the creation of man and the Flood may, therefore, be set aside, and this with the more confidence that, as has been hinted, a probable reason for the alteration will afterwards appear. But what of the nearly 600 years *added* by the Septuagint? May we avail ourselves of this larger chronology with any good assurance? However much we may desire to see the Scripture chronology extended, it is simply impossible to accept the statements of the Greek version. Table 3 shows that the translators found in their Hebrew manuscripts the same totals with which our Hebrew Bibles present us now. But they plainly arranged the items in the other two tables, so as to add six centuries to the age of man between the Creation and the Flood. As residents in Egypt, and probably translating in the first instance for the benefit of an Egyptian public, they were under peculiar temptations to resort to an artifice of this kind. The Egyptians commonly regarded their own history as going back more than



36,000 years into the past. Even Manetho, the Egyptian priest who wrote a Greek history of his people, and had published his work some years before the Septuagint translation was begun, sets down the Egyptian chronology as carrying us back 29,925 years before his own day. The Egyptians would, consequently, have laughed at the comparatively puny, if saner, numbers of the Scriptures; and, aware of the reception which the version would meet with, the Greek translators apparently did their best to soften the inevitable criticism. Table 1 reveals how they set to work. A century was added to the age of six of the patriarchs at the birth of the first-born, while for some reason 14 years were deducted from the age of two others, making the net increase 586. They thus added nearly one-third to the Hebrew reckoning. Conscience was probably appeased by their leaving the entire life-periods of the patriarchs intact (see Table 3), with the exception of the age of Lamech, from which they deducted 24 years. What they had added to increase the age of man before

the Flood, they deducted from the years which the patriarchs lived after the birth of their first-born. That these changes were due to the manipulations of the Greek translators is revealed by the fact that they differ alike from the Samaritan and from the Hebrew.

### III.—THE PERIOD FROM THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM.

A similar lengthening process is evident in the chronology of the period between the Flood and the birth of Abraham; and in this section, the lengthening is found in both the Samaritan and the Septuagint. Here two tables might suffice, as only the patriarch's age at the birth of his first-born and the number of years he afterwards lived, are given in the Hebrew and the Greek. There is no separate statement in these of the whole duration of the patriarch's life. In the Samaritan, however, this is supplied. We shall, therefore, for the purpose of comparison add here also a third table giving the whole life-period of each patriarch. We read in Gen. xi. 10: "These are the genera-

tions of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood." We shall commence our enumeration, therefore in Table 1 with this birth-year of Arphaxad. We shall then name the number of years which intervened in the case of the birth of each successive link in the genealogical chain (see Gen. xi. 10, 26):—

1. *Number of Years between the Flood and the Birth of Abraham.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Arphaxad born after the Flood . . . . .	2	2	2
Cainan born afterwards .	—	—	130
Salah " " .	35	135	135
Eber " " .	30	130	130
Peleg " " .	34	134	134
Reu " " .	30	130	130
Serug " " .	32	132	132
Nahor " " .	30	130	130
Terah " " .	29	79	79 <sup>1</sup>
Abram, Nahor, and Haran born afterwards . .	70	70	70
Total number of years .	292	942	1072

<sup>1</sup> Other copies, 179.

2. *Years lived by each of the Patriarchs after the Birth of the Son named in the Genealogy.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Shem . . . .	500	500	500
Arphaxad . . . .	403	303	400 <sup>1</sup>
Cainan . . . .	—	—	330
Salah . . . .	403	303	330
Eber . . . .	430	270	270 <sup>2</sup>
Peleg . . . .	209	109	209
Reu . . . .	207	107	207
Serug . . . .	200	100	200
Nahor . . . .	119	69	125 <sup>3</sup>

3. *Total number of Years lived by the Patriarchs from Shem to Nahor inclusive.*

	Hebrew.	Samaritan.	Septuagint.
Shem . . . .	600	600	600
Arphaxad . . . .	438	438	538
Cainan . . . .	—	—	460
Salah . . . .	433	433	460
Eber . . . .	464	404	404
Peleg . . . .	239	239	339
Reu . . . .	239	239	339
Serug . . . .	230	230	330
Nahor . . . .	148	148	304

<sup>1</sup> Other copies, 403.    <sup>2</sup> Other copies, 370.    <sup>3</sup> Other copies, 129.

I do not enter upon the various questions raised in regard to the chronology of the Septuagint. It is enough to say that the early references to it show that the copies must have varied very considerably. The following are summations from the Septuagint. Eusebius gives the interval from the Deluge to Terah as 945 years; Theophilus of Antioch, 936; George the Syncellus, 1070; Julius Africanus, 940; Josephus, 993; Clement of Alexandria, from the Deluge to the calling of Abraham, 1250. All these numbers were taken from copies of the Septuagint. The entire period from Adam to Christ varied in like manner. The era of Alexandria made it 5504 years; that of Antioch, 5490; that of Constantinople, 5510; George the Syncellus, 5500; the Pascal Chronicle, 5507. Hesychius gives the interval, "with all the exact writers," as 6000 years. Between this last number and that of the era of Antioch there is a difference of not fewer than 510 years.

It is well to remember this while comparing the lists in the foregoing Tables. The numbers

ascribed to the Septuagint are those of the present approved text. On examining Table 1 we discover that, with a single exception, there is an absolute harmony between the Septuagint and the Samaritan. The exception is the introduction into the Greek version of a new name, "Cainan." This exception, which we shall find to have some importance, I shall refer to farther on. That this additional link in the chain does not occur in the Samaritan, notwithstanding a very evident desire to lengthen the period between the Flood and Abraham, may be taken as a proof that it was never in the Hebrew text. But the reader will no doubt recollect what has been said concerning the previous lists—that the testimony of two witnesses may be taken as settling the original text. He will now ask whether we are to reject the Hebrew, and to admit the united testimony of the Samaritan and the Septuagint? But it is never safe to shut one's eyes and to march right on, even when a perfectly valid principle is supposed to guide us. What *are* the differences? With-

draw the first figure 1 (100) from each of those six numbers opposite the names from Salah to Nahor, and subtract 50 from the age ascribed to Terah, and the figures in all the three lists become identical! That is, 650 years are spread over the lists of the Samaritan and the Septuagint, which have no place in the Hebrew. Were these years added to these two versions? or were they subtracted from the Hebrew? That is the question to which we have to find a reply.

When we meet a fact of this kind, we have to search for probable motives. Was there any discoverable reason why the Jews should have removed one century from the age ascribed to each of those six patriarchs, and half a century from that assigned to the seventh? In other words, had they any inducement to *lessen* the period between the Flood and Abraham by the enormous space of 650 years? That question answers itself. When one recollects the gigantic difficulty which that short span of 292 years between



the Flood and the birth of Abraham has been, and must always have been, to the Israelite, the impossibility of his manufacturing it must be apparent. On the other hand, the inconsistency between this comparatively brief space and the long antiquity which it was supposed to cover must have been equally, if not still more, apparent to the Samaritans. These had come from Babylonia and the neighbouring districts, where the Flood, we now know, had left distinct and enduring memories. The Babylonians reckoned from it as from the great dividing line in the history of humanity. They speak of "the kings before the Flood" and of "the kings after the Flood." The long vista, which separated the times of Abraham and of Hammurabi from that ancient catastrophe, was one which the Samaritans of all people were the least likely to forget. The descendants of Noah had settled first of all apparently on the Armenian plateau, then travelled southward and settled to the east of Babylonia, in the region of Susiania, from whence it is indicated in the Baby-

lonian monuments that they came to the fertile plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

This brings us back with a new interest to the words with which Gen. xi. opens: "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, *as they journeyed from the east*, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar: and they dwelt there." Here the words "the whole earth" indicate what is apparently a very large and widely extended population. But if this is so, then there must have been time for the "eight souls" that came forth from the ark to increase to myriads. Research has also compelled us lately to realise that every word of the verse which follows is laden with significance: "And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime they had for mortar" (verse 3). In a book lately issued, professedly to justify the higher criticism, but all whose facts, strange to say, reveal the minute accuracy of

the Scripture,<sup>1</sup> it is shown from the pictorial forms of the earliest writing with which we are acquainted that the primeval abode of humanity was “under the slopes of mount Elvend.” This writing reveals the objects with which men were then in daily contact, and thus not only tells where they originally dwelt, but also gives us the story of their early migrations. “From their primitive home under the slopes of mount Elvend,” says Mr. Boscawen, “it was carried to the lowlands bordering on the Tigris, and watered by the Karun, Disful, and other streams—the ancient Anzan, or Susiania, a corn producing land of almost equal richness to the Chaldean plain—and from thence transferred to Babylonia, where it underwent still further modifications.”

And not only is the Scripture verified as to the locality of man’s early habitation, and as to the course taken by the primeval migrations; but it is also startlingly confirmed in the hint which is conveyed by its language.

<sup>1</sup> Boscawen, “The First of Empires,” p. 58.

When we ponder the words: "And they had brick for stone," it is plain that *men were already stone-builders*, and that brick was taken as a substitute for the customary material. Now it is somewhat startling to learn that *the earliest Babylonian bricks are imitations of stone*. "The earliest bricks," says Hilprecht (whose words are quoted with approval by Mr. Boscawen), "are very small, flat on the lower surface, and strongly marked on the upper side, with generally also a thumb-mark. *They look more like rubble or quarry stones*, in imitation of which they were made (Gen. xi. 3) than the artificial products of man." <sup>1</sup>

We have here, therefore, no legend, nor half-informed tradition, but thoroughly equipped history. The statements, condensed though they are, furnish us with a luminous outlook upon that past, which they seem, at first sight, to touch so lightly. Time was required, therefore, for the settlements, and for the slow onward movement of humanity. To this has

<sup>1</sup> "Explorations in Bible Lands," p. 542.

now to be added the colonisation of Babylonia, the founding and the rise of its great cities; the development of the dominion of Nimrod; and the events of a long subsequent history. We can imagine men acquainted with these facts, and especially the Israelitish priest and his family just brought back from the midst of a people who were fully acquainted with them, asking themselves whether 292 years could possibly cover this portion of human history. The Jew, whose Bible was under the guardianship of a priesthood constantly brought face to face, as it were, with God, would not dare to even dream of altering "the holy oracles," however great the difficulties might seem to be. But an irresponsible Israelitish priest of Jeroboam's manufacture, confronted with the certainty of placing a huge stumbling-block in the way of a people in one of the most hopeful of attitudes towards the Law, might make a venture. *He* might possibly insert these 650 years, and so might change the apparently impossible 292 into 942, an interval of nearly one thousand years,

in whose mighty sweep the space provided for those early developments of humanity might seem to be sufficiently ample.

But an imputation of this sort ought not to be hinted unless it has some foundation to rest upon. Does the Samaritan text show any indication that the original has been tampered with here? The reply must be in the affirmative. The Samaritan, as I have already indicated, adds a clause to each part of the record, which is not found either in the Hebrew or in the Septuagint. It is plainly moulded by the Samaritan on the earlier records of the selected generations among the Sethites, the concluding link in which is Noah. In that earlier record there are, as we have observed, three statements: (1) A. lived so long a time and begat B.; (2) A. lived after he begat B. so many more years and begat sons and daughters; and (3) all the days of A. were so many years: and he died. In "the generations of Shem" there is a departure in the Hebrew from the former arrangement. We have (1) and (2), but not

(3). We do not read, for instance : “ All the days of Shem were six hundred years : and he died.” Yet that very statement is in the Samaritan ; and a similar clause giving the entire life-span is added in the case of each of the patriarchs subsequently named in the genealogy. Here, then, there is one undeniable alteration of the text ; and it would seem to have been made by way of atonement for the disturbances caused by the lengthening of the periods between Shem and Abraham. The complete age assigned to each patriarch in the original Hebrew has been repeated by the Samaritan in every case, except that of Eber, where we have 404 instead of 464, but the omission of the 60 may have been an accident. It is quite possible, too, that the *shortening* of the dates between Adam and Noah, which is so marked and indeed so mysterious a feature of the Samaritan Pentateuch, may have the same explanation. They appear to be another atonement. The years were probably shortened in the first genealogy by 349 that they might be lengthened with a



better conscience in the period between the Flood and Abraham. It did not fully adjust the balance, but it lessened the divergence.

With regard to the Septuagint, the same necessity for lengthening this latter period was no doubt felt to exist in the face of the inflated Egyptian chronology. Having already begun the alteration of the text, its continuance was now a matter of comparative ease as well as of supposed necessity. The agreement of its figures in Table 1 with those of the Samaritan seems to have a simple explanation. This agreement is so absolute and so frequently repeated that it cannot have been due to chance. The Alexandrian Jews who made the translation were evidently relieved to find that the Samaritan had given so favourable a reading of the text, and they seem to have adopted it wholly and at once.

But it has been noticed that the Septuagint introduces a name into the list, which is found neither in the Hebrew nor in the Samaritan, that, namely of Cainan. There can be no doubt, then, that the insertion is due to the

Septuagint. But did the Septuagint insert the name of an imaginary personage in order to swell the number of years? Had it done so, it may be assumed as quite certain that it would not have been content with one such alteration. Others would have been added as well, and the chronology would have assumed still larger proportions. Besides, there is an explanation of their action which shields them from this reproach. There is good ground for believing that they knew that this name existed in ancient Hebrew, though not inspired, records. They were aware that Arphaxad was really the grandfather, and not the father, of Salah. Salah's father was Cainan; and, not knowing why he should have been left out of the Hebrew text, they inserted his name in the proper place in their translation. Those who meddle with the sacred text have as small belief in its wisdom as in its authority.

That this is the explanation is made clear by the genealogy of our Lord in Luke's Gospel. There we read that the order of the names

really ran thus: Arphaxad, Cainan, Salah (iii. 35, 36). Cainan's name was blotted out of the genealogy in Genesis, just as the names of the three kings are blotted out in the genealogy in Matthew. But Luke's is the Gospel of *the Saviour of humanity*; and in entire accordance with the purpose of the Gospel the name is here restored. We shall refer again to this important fact.

Meanwhile it is well to note that the restoration of omitted generations seems to be a feature of the genealogy of our Lord in the third Gospel—the genealogy, it now seems certain, of Mary, the mother of our Lord. It is instructive to compare the middle period in each—from David to Salathiel. The names are as follows :—

## MATTHEW.

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David.  
Solomon.  
Roboam.  
Abia.  
Asa.  
Josaphat.  
Joram.

## LUKE.

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David.  
Nathan.  
Mattatha.  
Menan.  
Melea.  
Eliakim.  
Jonan.

MATTHEW.

Ozias.  
Joatham.  
Achaz.  
Ezekias.  
Manasses.  
Amon.  
Josias.  
Jechonias.  
Salathiel.

LUKE.

Joseph.  
Juda.  
Simeon.  
Levi.  
Matthat.  
Jorim.  
Eliezer.  
Jose.  
Er.  
Elmodam.  
Cosam.  
Addi.  
Melchi.  
Neri.  
Salathiel.

Luke has thus 22 generations where Matthew has only 16. We know that in Matthew 3 are blotted out. But those generations, as well as others apparently, are restored in Luke. Even if the symbolic significance should not be attributed to the inclusion of the generations in the Gospel of the Redeemer, it will at least be admitted that, giving as Luke does the natural descent of our Lord, the Spirit includes these generations here as well as that of the earlier rejected Cainan.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHEN DID THE FLOOD OCCUR?

It will be evident from what has just been said, that, however much we may desire to see the Scripture chronology lengthened, it is quite impossible to set aside the Hebrew text in favour either of the Septuagint or of the Samaritan.

To a perfectly sane and candid mind other devices which have been mentioned are equally impossible. It has, for example, been suggested that the vast life-span of a primeval patriarch should be regarded, not as the age of an individual, but as the duration of an epoch which bore his name.

The reader will find this system referred to, for instance, in Bishop Ellicott's "Old Testament Commentary for English Readers"

(see vol. i., pp. 33 and 35). He points out that, apart from the name of Arphaxad, all the rest, from Shem to Abraham, are "full of meaning." Thus :—

"*Salah* means *mission*, the sending out of men in colonies to occupy new lands.

"*Eber* is the *passage*, marking the migration of the headquarters of the race, and the crossing of some great obstacle in its way, most probably the crossing of the river Tigris. With this would begin the long struggle between the Semitic and the Hamitic races in Mesopotamia," &c., &c.

Another suggestion is that the names are those of towns, or of successive settlements which formed the abodes of the race for the times mentioned in the genealogy. If we adopted any of these hypotheses we should have, of course, to add the numbers together during which the successive periods or settlements lasted, and should as a consequence have soon a quite imposing "Scripture Chronology."

Thus :—

The Shem period lasted . .	600 years.
The Arphaxad period „ . .	438 „
The Salah period „ . .	433 „
The Eber period „ . .	464 „
The Peleg period „ . .	239 „
The Reu period „ . .	239 „
The Serug period „ . .	230 „
The Nachor period „ . .	148 „
The Terah period „ . .	205 „

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In all 2996 years.

This would give us almost 3000 years for the period between the Flood and Abraham. But the extension would be purchased at a terrible price. We should have destroyed the very foundation upon which we were building. The Scripture records would not only be thrown into utter confusion, but would also be hopelessly discredited.

Our task is to interpret our documents, not to alter them. But does this mean that we are to arrest our inquiry, and to accept Ussher's chronology? That is a conclusion which by no means follows. Having been assured of the authority of our documents,



it is our duty to read and to understand these, as well as every other portion of the Scripture, and a careful re-study of the genealogy in Gen. xi. soon reveals that the correctness of Archbishop Ussher's chronology has been too hastily admitted. This chronology is built upon the assumption that the year, for example, first named in the list in Gen. xi. 10-26 is the actual birth-year of the son whose name appears in the list. It may be asked why that assumption should be questioned, and, indeed, why it should be spoken of as an assumption at all. It must be admitted that there seems to be reason for the reader's astonishment. For it is undeniable that we read that Shem begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood (verse 10); that Arphaxad, at the age of thirty-five, begat Salah (verse 12); and that Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram. Nothing at first sight seems plainer than that, without further ado, we may take these numbers and build them into our chronology; and that, in short, the problem as to the age of Flood resolves

itself into a simple addition sum. But, if a fuller study shows that this reading of the Scripture cannot be justified, then it must be admitted that the chronology is based upon essential error. Every added date is an additional blunder, if the dates given are misunderstood and misapplied. That this is in reality an unchallengeable and melancholy fact a few words will suffice to show.

This assertion will probably strike the reader with amazement. Does not the Scripture, it may be asked, make these very statements? Does it not say that Shem "begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood," that "Arphaxad lived five and thirty years and begat Salah"? And does not this, the querist may continue, bind up the years mentioned with the names which are given? To all this only one reply is possible. The Scripture statements are cast in that very mould from the commencement to the close of the genealogy. The names recorded and the years stated are bound up intentionally and indissolubly. But it will be acknowledged that

no interpreter of the Scriptures should run away with a hasty impression. It is a fact equally unchallengeable that, according to the Scripture itself, the years mentioned are *not the actual birth years* of at least some most important links in this genealogical chain. I need hardly add that, if this can be proved, the basis of the commonly-received chronology is gone.

It may be thought that, in directing attention to such a characteristic, we are pushing to the front a Bible "inconsistency." But this will not alarm any one who, like the writer, believes that the inspired Word of God is incapable of inconsistency. It is our imperative duty to ascertain, and to receive with humility, the teaching of "the holy oracles." And if we find that, so far as we can compare these statements with other information afforded by the Scripture, the record here persists in binding names and years together, which are not so bound chronologically, then we conclude that we are again in the presence of one of those fruitful "difficulties," some

of which we have already encountered. The Divine Teacher will have here hid a truth which awaits our discovery, and which, like the gold in the quartz and the diamond in the clay, will abundantly reward a seeker's toil.

That matters are as indicated above will soon be evident. The opening statement is: "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old and begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood" (Gen. xi. 10). Now, when we turn back to the general list of Shem's descendants recorded in the preceding chapter, we read: "The children of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram" (Gen. x. 22). It is clear, therefore, that Arphaxad was not Shem's *eldest* son. Two at least were born before him—Elam and Asshur. I say two *at least*, for the phrase—"and begat sons and daughters" (xi. 11, &c.)—which occurs in reference to all these patriarchs—suggests a large family. Apparently only those descendants are mentioned in the general genealogy from whom sprang the various peoples known to antiquity

and to ourselves. But, confining ourselves, as we necessarily must, to the names which are given, Arphaxad is the *third*, and not the eldest, son. And now comes the difficulty, which we shall find repeated in a still stronger form at the close of the genealogy. Noah and his family went into the Ark eight souls; and they came out of the Ark eight souls. There were no children born, therefore, to Noah's sons during the continuance of the Flood. But if *all* the sons and daughters of Shem were born *after* the Flood, it is evident that Arphaxad, who was at least the *third* son, is not likely to have been born "*two years after the Flood.*" The statement of the Bible is nevertheless explicit; we may go further and say that it is emphatic. It says that Arphaxad *was* born at the time named.

Now, there is plainly only one way in which these statements can be reconciled. *If Arphaxad represents the entire family of Shem*; if, in God's sight, he is in some way not merely "the head of the house," but also represents it so fully that he is bound up

with the house, so that before God he is it and it is he; if, in other words, the Spirit means to impress the truth upon us that these selected individuals are selected not for themselves, but as symbolic mediums of blessing for the family; then, I do not know that this could have been done more effectively than by insisting that the family's advent was *his* advent. The family was seen of God in him. Whatever of a forced character may appear in this suggestion will disappear when we recollect who these men are. It will be noticed that one name alone appears in each link of the genealogy. The genealogy is a list, then, of *Divine selections*. With what view are the selections made? The answer is evident: these are *the progenitors of the Christ*. This is really the genealogy of Jesus—"the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." Could there be a better way of emphasising the great truth—ever before the eye of God in all those preparations for Christ's coming—of our Lord's representative character, and of what God's selection

of HIM means for humanity? As Christ stands for humanity; as men and the world itself are seen of God in Him; so Arphaxad—as Christ's forerunner and type—stands for the family; it is seen of God in him.

We now come to the omitted link in this genealogy. The name of Cainan is given in Luke as that of the son of Arphaxad; and Salah, mentioned in Genesis xi. as Arphaxad's son, is shown by Luke to have been in reality his grandson. His words are: "Heber, which was the son of Sala, which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem" (Luke iii. 35, 36). It need hardly be remarked that this name has no connection with that of Canaan, the son of Ham. "Canaan" is a different word from "Cainan," or "Kenan," and is quite distinct in meaning. The latter name was borne by the son of Enos and father of Mahalaleel in the list of those who were Divinely selected from the generations between Adam and Noah. But now, when the name occurs in the list of Shem's descendants, it appears to have been



blotted out, like the three kings' names in Matthew, and the entire generation to which Cainan belonged is passed over.

Strenuous attempts have been made to set this difficulty aside. The name, which is omitted in the Hebrew Bible, is introduced, as we have already noted, by the Septuagint. It is contended that this was a late addition to the Septuagint, and that the name was not found in the first copies of that translation. But of this there is no proof. The evidence seems, on the contrary, to be conclusive as to its having stood in the earliest copies. Similar attempts have been made to explain away its appearance in Luke's Gospel. This, too, has been said to be a late addition. But once more the testimony of the manuscripts sets the suggestion completely aside. Another of those ventures is the statement that Luke borrowed the name from the Septuagint. That is a theory, however, which no one who believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures can entertain for a moment; and it may be added that, if we owed the third Gospel to

a merely human authorship that culled material from all quarters, the Book could never have possessed that character which gives it so worthy a place among "the holy Scriptures," and which separates it, as well as the other sacred writings, from all literature besides. The name Cainan is shown by overwhelming manuscript evidence to have belonged to the original Gospel; and it could have been placed in that original only by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

This settles for us the question of the authenticity of the name. We are here informed, then, by the word of God that Arphaxad was not the father, but the grandfather, of Salah. The presence of the name in the Septuagint also evidently implies that it was known to the Jews in the third century B.C. that the genealogy ran thus:—

Shem,  
Arphaxad,  
Cainan,  
Salah.

Not knowing why the name was omitted

in the Scripture, and eagerly desirous of lengthening the chronology, the translators, as has been already remarked, embraced it in their list. It may again be said that the notion that they invented the name is, upon the face of it, absurd. Had they indeed ventured so far, they would not, pressed as they were by the fantastic claims of Egypt to a high antiquity, have stopped with that one achievement. The list would inevitably have been swollen by the addition of other imaginary names.

What we have now to note, however, is that the name of Cainan, though included in Luke, the Gospel of the Saviour and Restorer, is excluded in Genesis xi. We read that "Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah" (verse 12). Here the chronological difficulty again presents itself, but now in an aggravated form. Salah, as we have just seen, was not the son of Arphaxad. Then, keeping in view the ages mentioned in the genealogy, Arphaxad must have been much older than 35 when Salah, his grand-

son, was born. Evidently Cainan's name was blotted out—why, we do not know. The name of no other in that generation was substituted for his. The entire generation is thus passed over; but, in the next generation, a son of Cainan's, Salah, is chosen. This last becomes *the representative both of his own generation and of that which preceded it*. He is bound up with both of them, and the advent of Arphaxad's family is consequently regarded as his advent. Thus here again, in a startling chronological difficulty, we are compelled to read the great truth that God's Elected One is elected, not for himself, but for his brethren. That is the Divine law from which all priesthood springs. It lies behind the anguish and the shame of Calvary. These typical selections were foreshadowings of "Christ our Passover," who "is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). But if this is so, then a former conclusion again compels our assent. While there is chronological guidance in these numbers given by the Scripture, we are by no means dealing

with a mere chronology. The numbers serve that deeply spiritual purpose which pervades the entire Bible.

A last and crowning instance occurs in the conclusion of the Shemite genealogy. This ends with the words: "And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran" (Gen. xi. 20). Here Abram's name is placed first. This is explained when we read on and learn that, not only is Abram the selected one of his generation, but he is also made the introducer of a new era and the founder of God's kingdom upon the earth. We are quite prepared, therefore, to learn that Abram is not the eldest son of Terah, although his name appears first in this part of the genealogy. But, when we look at the words again, the shadow of another "Bible difficulty" falls upon us. These tell us that when Terah had completed his seventieth year those three sons of his were born. What! one exclaims, *were they all born in one year?* It is possible for an ingenious thinker to see a way out of the

difficulty, and to answer, "Yes; they were born, just as the words say that they were, in one year." When Abraham was rebuked by Abimelech for having represented Sarah to be his sister, the patriarch explained that the representation was not a falsehood. He feared, he said, to tell the whole truth: "Because I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet, indeed, she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife" (Gen. xx. 11, 12). An explanation might consequently be offered, which would proceed upon the line here indicated. These three sons might have been by different mothers.

But we read on a few verses further and discover that the difficulty meets us again, and this time in a much more acute shape. Before looking at these verses, however, let us note what is told us in Acts vii. 4. There Stephen reminds the Sanhedrim that Abraham, being called of God, "came out of the

land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran ; and from thence, *when his father was dead*, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell." This is quite in keeping with what we gather from the narrative in Genesis. In chapter xi. 32 we read : "And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years ; and Terah died in Haran." The next words in the narrative are these ; "Now the Lord had said unto Abram," or, translating literally, "And the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. . . . So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him ; and Lot went with him : and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran" (Gen. xii. 1-4).

We learn here, therefore, that Abraham was 75 years of age when he left Haran upon the death of his father. But his father died at the age of 205 years (Gen. xi. 32). Abraham was, accordingly, 75 when Terah was 205. Now, deducting 75 from 205, these figures tell



us that Abraham was born when his father was 130! Here, then, our difficulty has returned in a much more serious form. It is a difficulty, too, which will not be charmed away with a few indulgent suppositions. For these last words make it perfectly clear that Abraham was *not* born when his father was 70. He was not in existence till another 60 years had passed away. And yet, notwithstanding this, the Scripture also affirms that "Terah lived 70 years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran." Both statements are perfectly clear and definite. They confront us within the brief compass of eleven verses. And even the higher criticism fails here to come to the help of the distressed theologian with its theories of "different sources." For both the statements, in the view even of those theories, are from the same pen, being ascribed to the marvellous and imaginary "P." And their close neighbourhood forbids the supposition that, when the second was written, the first had been forgotten. Taking the Scripture, then, even as common literature, both affirma-

tions were clearly intended: both were regarded as true.

Can they be reconciled? They can; but their reconciliation discloses once more the truth which is hidden beneath all these genealogical difficulties. For this is merely a repetition of the problem which we have already twice considered. Arphaxad was not Shem's first-born, and he plainly did not come into the world two years after the Flood. That was the year when Shem's family began, and, Arphaxad representing that family, it is registered as *his* birth-year. And so it is also with Salah, who is said to have been born when Arphaxad, his grandfather, was 35, but who was not actually born till the generation following. He was the chosen representative of two generations, and his representative character is expressed by the year, in which the first of these generations appears, being registered in God's Book as *his* birth-year. These instances have revealed to us the law which governs these genealogies of the ancestors of the Christ. The selected sons are not neces-

sarily the first-born; but, being Divinely selected to represent their families, they are registered as the first-born.

In this way the difficulty regarding the birth of Abraham vanishes, and leaves the same great spiritual truth unveiled before our eyes. The facts are here, as we have already seen, so plain that they cannot be gainsaid. Ussher remarks: "When Terah had lived seventy years, there was born to him the eldest of his three sons; and he, not Abram (who came not into the world till sixty years after), but Haran, father-in-law of the third brother Nachor, died and left a daughter, married to her uncle, Nachor."<sup>1</sup> Clinton is quite as explicit. "The erroneous date," he writes, "for the birth of Abraham, placing the call of Abraham into Canaan sixty years before the death of his father, is contrary to Genesis xi. 32; xii. 1."<sup>2</sup> Would that those giants in chronology had asked themselves why, in the face of such plain and full state-

<sup>1</sup> *Annals*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Fasti Hellenici*, vol. i. p. 290.

ments, the Scripture nevertheless did affirm that Abram *was* born when Terah was seventy years old! Unless we are to abandon the guidance of our Divine Teacher, we must receive both statements with equal readiness and with equal confidence. We must not surrender ourselves to one of them, and banish the other from our thought. We must suffer both to speak, till the truth which God intends us to see shall dawn upon us. Abraham *represents the family*. He is chosen not for himself alone, but also for *it*. Therefore the appearing of the family is registered as *his* appearing.

It is only, however, when we consider these selected ones in their relation to Him of whom they are types, that the full-orbed truth shines upon us. The student of Scripture will remember that we meet the same striking, and to many most embarrassing, representation in the case of our Saviour. He is spoken of, for example, as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). Here is what might be called a stupendous chronological difficulty. Our Lord was not crucified

till long ages *after* the foundation of the world. It might have been expected, therefore, that attempts would be made to explain the words in some other way. The Catena, an old collection of comments upon the Scriptures, indicates that the words, "from the foundation of the world," must be joined to the first part of the verse—"whose names are not written;" and it adds: "For thus it must be understood, *not as the Scripture has it*; because the lamb was not slain from the foundation of the world."

The reason here given is curious. The Scripture must not be taken as it reads, *because* the statement so taken would constitute a difficulty! But though this passage should be surrendered, the same representation confronts us elsewhere. We find it in 1 Peter i. 18-20: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was

*foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was manifest in these last times for you." This Lamb is the Passover Lamb, the sacrifice whose poured-out life protects all who shelter behind it. He was not only set forth in these last times for us; He was also set apart *in this capacity*—the sacrifice for sin—before the world was created and before Man's life began. But God the Son did not actually become "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29) till His incarnation, and not, indeed, till His death on Calvary. Why, then, is there this ante-dating in the sacrifice? Why is our Redeemer set forth as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"? There is only one answer. *Christ is the world's Representative*. God sees the world in Him. All that is in God's plan for the world becomes possible only in Christ. Over Christ's devoting of Himself to be the world's burden-bearer, God passed, as it were, to the work of creation, for the final triumph of good over evil was thereby, and thereby only, fully assured. Looking now upon Abraham as the ancestor

and the type of the Lord Jesus, the chronological difficulty is not merely explained, but we also see that its presence was a necessity. As the world was, and is, seen in Jesus, so Terah's family was seen in Abraham; and Abraham, being thus a picture of the Lord Jesus, had necessarily to occupy that place. Though not the first-born and the natural head of the family, he was nevertheless registered as the first-born; for he represented the spiritual Head of humanity. Thus, in these last days, grown so wise that they have only scorn for the doctrine of the substitutionary life and death of Christ, the Scripture renews its testimony in this plain and only solution of some of its earliest difficulties.

There are similar descriptions of our Lord which have constituted some of the hugest difficulties which exegesis has had to encounter. We read, for example, in Rom. viii. 29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Here, plainly, we have in view



the entire sonship of God—the whole family of the Redeemed. From these we cannot shut out the ancient saints—Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and the rest; for this is the Divine, pre-arranged plan for the regeneration of humanity. There was not one plan for the Spirit's work in man's heart *before* the coming of Christ, and another plan for that work *after* the coming of Christ. There was not one ideal of human perfectness in the Divine mind before the Gospel era, and another ideal of it after the Gospel was revealed. The saved, both before and after the Lord's coming, were predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. In all this there is, of course, no difficulty whatever. The difficulty begins when we ask a further question. How can "the Man Christ Jesus," the Christ of history, be spoken of as "the *first-born*" among these ancient brethren? As man, He came not into existence till 2000 years after Abraham, and 1600 years after Moses, and 700 years after Isaiah. *These*, it might be said, were the elder brethren; and the priority of their

birth, and also of their acceptance with God, might be held to render it impossible to speak of Christ as the *First-born*. But the reply is very simple. *All these were accepted of God in, and because of, Christ Jesus.* At the head of humanity, as seen of God from eternity, there was One upon whom His eye rested. This One is the subject of prophecy as well as of history. Isaiah says of Him: "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6); and John declares: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). It was in view of His coming who, though he was God, should yet be man among men, that all these were accepted; and it was into His image that they were transformed by the Spirit. All humanity was seen in Him, its *First-born*, its true Head. And the fact that these, who were Divinely selected to be the ancestors and the types of Jesus, were reckoned for the first-born, though they were not chronologi-

cally the first-born, need not, therefore, surprise us. Without that seeming discrepancy their representative character would not have been emphasised, or even made known. And without this difficulty their position would also have failed to set forth a leading feature in the mystery of Christ.

But this is merely one of several similar statements. Our Lord is described in Colossians i. 15 as “the image of the invisible God, THE FIRST-BORN OF EVERY CREATURE,” or, “OF ALL CREATION.” Here we have the same apparent displacement which we have met with in the statements regarding Abram, Salah, and Arphaxad. How *can* One, it may be asked, who was born within historic times be *the first-born* of a creation which preceded His advent by many, and long-extended, ages? To escape this difficulty expositors have attempted to give a secondary meaning to the word “first-born.” But if the difficulty were removed, the truth which it expresses would be obliterated. The entire creation was seen in Christ—in “the Man Christ Jesus”—

from all eternity. It was for His sake that it was endowed and blessed. He is its head and representative for ever. That He was not actually born into the family of man till "the fulness of the times" had come was an arrangement for our sake. But man and all creation have had, and have always had, one Head—one First-born. The ordinary first-born in point of time may be described as an accident. There can be nothing in *him* as man to meet the need of his brethren for deliverance and blessing. He is merely marking the place as one which will be occupied by Another. He is the symbol and the prophecy of the Burden-Bearer and Redeemer—*the* Son of Man.

Another passage to which the reader's attention may be directed is Heb. i. 6: "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." It will be noticed that He is brought into a world already existing, and, nevertheless, though late in point of time, He is "THE FIRST-BEGOTTEN," the Head, and Representative of all Creation. How full of

consolation and of hope this view of Christ is I need not say. But it was essential that this grandest element in the Divine plan of mercy, this outstanding trait in the fulness of the Christ, should have some prophetic expression in those selected ones who were His ancestors and types. It should not surprise us, therefore, that the place assigned to them in the genealogies, and the very difficulties which that place so assigned has raised, should have anticipated the difficulties which surround the position attributed in Scripture to "the Son of Man."

It will be owned that this digression was unavoidable, if we are to feel thoroughly certain that this antedating of the birth-years of these Divinely-selected ones was fully intended. That it was intended will now be so evident that we need say nothing further upon this remarkable feature of those genealogies in which alone the reckonings are recorded which afford a foundation for our chronology. Returning now to our problem, it will be clear that we have to interpret, and not to force, the state-

ments of Scripture. The numbers, which have been hitherto used as if they were mere chronological material, are plainly *not* mere chronological material; and, in the name of common honesty and of common-sense, they must not be treated as if they were ordinary chronological dates. Abraham *represents the family* as Christ represents humanity. It was only in this way that Abraham could fulfil his part as the type and the prophecy of the Chosen One of God. We have no more a mere historic date in the statement that "Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram," than we have a mere historic date in that other statement of Scripture which speaks of Christ as "the first-born of every creature." It is quite impossible to take these as chronological facts, and to use them as foundations for historic dates. But the impossibility of that interpretation shuts us up, as we have just seen, to the recognition of the central doctrine of Revelation—salvation through the substitution of God's Elected One.

What, then, do we possess in these Bible

numbers? Are they, because of this higher mission, valueless for chronology? By no means. *They furnish us with limits* within which the truth which we seek to know will be found. The chronology cannot be less than the one limit: it cannot be more than the other limit. To take an example: Arphaxad's birth was not earlier than two years after the Flood, for that was the year in which Shem's family began. But, if Arphaxad was not born then, he must have been begotten some time within the 500 years which formed the after life-period of his father Shem. To arrive at a date for Arphaxad's birth a simple plan will, therefore, be to take the mean of these two numbers. Thus:—

Shem's family began .	2 years after the Flood.
Shem lived for another 500	” ” ”
<hr style="width: 10%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
The sum of these is .	502 years.

Taking the half of this we get 251 years after the Flood as a probable date for Arphaxad's birth.

It is natural to fear that in this way we



may obtain results much in excess of the truth. In some instances the result will possibly be more than the truth, but in other instances it will be less than the truth. Let us take Abraham's case, for example. Here we have definite numbers, and are able to test our results. Adopting in this instance also, then, the proposed plan, we proceed as before.

Terah's family began when he was	70	years old.
He lived afterwards	135	„
	<hr/>	
These give us	205	years.

Dividing this result by 2, we have  $102\frac{1}{2}$  years as Terah's age when Abraham was born. But, as a matter of fact, Abraham was born nearly 28 years later, when his father was 130. This plan would therefore have given us, in this instance where we can test our method, 28 years too few. When we remember what seems to have been a very frequent, if not a constant, feature of these Divine selections, our confidence in our results will be increased. In the selection of one of

the sons of Jesse, it was the *youngest* who was taken. One might venture to say that there was an evident reason for this. The youngest was he from whom the family expected least. In David's case, Jesse and his sons might have used the words in Israel's confession with respect to the Messiah (Isa. liii. 3): "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." No one seems to have had a thought about *him* when the family were brought together to be presented before the prophet; and when David comes to the camp for the deliverance of Israel, the only words of discouragement and, indeed, of fierce rebuke that he meets with come from the lips of his brother. But it was this very position of neglect and apparent lack of all things that command attention and awaken hope which made the youngest in a family the fittest type of Him of whom it was written: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii. 2). Now if David's birth year had to be calculated, and if we had taken

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the middle of Jesse's life-period (which is really what our method amounts to), we should certainly have made too low, and not too high, an estimate. For we read of Jesse: "the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul" (1 Sam. xvii. 12), and at that time David was but a lad. This encourages us to believe that the plan proposed will not give excessive dates.

We shall take, therefore, the mean between the two limits contained in the Scripture. The first of these will give us the intervals between the births of the eldest sons of the successive generations. Thus:—

Shem's	family begins	2 years after the Flood.
Arphaxad's	" "	35 years later.
Cainan's	" " (say)	35 "
Salah's	" "	30 "
Eber's	" "	34 "
Peleg's	" "	30 "
Reu's	" "	32 "
Serug's	" "	30 "
Nahor's	" "	29 "
Terah's	" "	70 "

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327 years.

This gives us 327 years from the Flood to the birth of Terah's first-born. To this limit

we cannot descend, as we have already shown. The interval between the Flood and the birth of Abraham would have been 327 years had the selected one been always the first-born of the family. But that supposition is impossible to any one who reads the Scripture. Let us now see what the limit is beyond which, on the other hand, we must not pass. If Abraham was not born when his father was 70 years of age, then some date must be assigned for his birth between that year and Terah's death, 135 years afterwards; and so with Arphaxad and the rest. We shall now ascertain, then, the sum of all these periods between the birth of the eldest son and the death of the patriarch.

Shem	died	500	years	after	the	birth	of	his	eldest	son.
Arphaxad	„	403	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Cainan	„	(say) 403	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Salah	„	403	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Eber	„	430	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Peleg	„	209	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Reu	„	207	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Serug	„	200	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Nahor	„	119	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„
Terah	„	135	„	„	„	„	„	„	„	„

---

. In all 3009 years.

This is the extreme limit, therefore, upon the other side. We shall now place those two numbers together, find the sum of them, divide by 2, and thus ascertain the mean between these extremes.

$$\begin{array}{r} 327 \\ 3009 \\ 2 \overline{) 3336} \\ 1668 \end{array}$$

We thus obtain 1668 years as the probable interval between the birth of Abraham and the Flood.

The bearing of this result upon present controversies will be at once apparent. The very high claims made for the antiquity of Egyptian and Assyrian monuments rest upon the flimsiest foundation. A great authority has recently said that the most ancient of them is not older than 3000 B.C. For these 3000 years Scripture chronology thus gives ample room, even though none of the monuments should be older than the Flood. For, as we have now seen, the basis of Ussher's chronology (which assigns 2349 B.C. as the

date of that catastrophe) disappears. The probable date is as follows:—

	Years.
From the Deluge to the birth of Abraham . . .	1668
From the birth of Abraham to the birth of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 5) . . . . .	100
From the birth of Isaac to the Exodus (Gen. xv. 13)	400
From the Exodus to the founding of the Temple (Acts xiii.) . . . . .	573
From Solomon's fourth year to the birth of Christ .	1012

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Probable date of the Deluge . . . . . 3753 B.C.

Jackson gives 1015 B.C. as the year of Solomon's accession. His fourth year, when the building of the Temple was begun, would thus be 1012 B.C. And the Deluge must, therefore, in accordance with the Scripture, be assigned to somewhere about 3753 B.C.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW OLD IS MAN?

WE are now nearly prepared to furnish our reply to the question stated above and also in the Title to this little book. All that remains is to determine the character of that part of Scripture which forms the only chronological basis for ascertaining the interval between the creation of Adam and the Deluge. Have those numbers in the fifth chapter of Genesis been charged with a merely chronological message? Or have they also, as well as those in the later genealogy, a symbolic purpose? To put our question in another way, have the numbers been recorded merely to tell us how long those men lived, and how many years these ten generations covered? Or, do the numbers compel us here also to recognise the repre-



sentative character of the man whom God chooses?

This question receives a clear and unanswerable reply in the statement with which the genealogy concludes. We are told there that "Noah was 500 years old, and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (Gen. v. 32). We have here a form of statement with which we are now familiar. The date which is given with such precision is the birth-year of *the first-born* of the family. For we conclude at once that Noah's three sons were not born in one year. Noah and his sons afford us one illustration, at least, of what the Scripture means when it tells us that "Noah was perfect in his generations" (Gen. vi. 9). In a time of almost universal polygamy, they were each the husband of only one wife. That fact shuts out the possibility of contending that the statement presents no difficulty, and that Noah's three sons were all born in one year. Besides, there are express statements which show that Shem at least was *not* born in Noah's 500th year. The

Flood lasted a year. The family entered the Ark in Noah's 600th year (Gen. vii. 6); and they left it in his 601st year (viii. 13). When we read, then, of Shem's begetting Arphaxad "two years after the Flood" (xi. 10), it is clear that the event must have taken place in Noah's 603rd year. But the same verse tells us that Shem was at this time exactly 100 years old (xi. 10).

The bearing of all this will be evident. If the statement, that those three sons were born when Noah was 500 years old, is to be accepted in its merely chronological sense, then Shem must have been 103 years when his father was 603. But the Bible here informs us that Shem was at that very time exactly 100. It follows, therefore, that Shem was *not* born when his father was 500 years old. He came into the world three years later.

Here also, then, the Scripture compels us to set aside the merely chronological sense and to note that Shem is the type, as well as the ancestor, of the Christ—"the First-born of all creation." The advent of the

family is registered as his advent. It may be thought, from the form of the statement of Adam's age at the birth of Seth (Gen. v. 3), that we must accept this date at least as merely chronological. Most readers will at first take that view. For the words seem to shut out any other interpretation. "And Adam," we read, "lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." But the words may point to a new beginning of Adam's family. Abel was dead, and Cain was a banished murderer. Besides, there is no difference between the form of this statement and that of those which follow, including the assurance that Shem was born when Noah was 500 years of age. It will be noticed too, that up till, and including, Noah, with whom this genealogy ends, *only one son is named* in each generation. This again is an emphatic intimation of the representative character of these selected men.

We must necessarily, therefore, deal with these earlier numbers as we have dealt with

the other. So far as chronology is concerned, the Scripture once more merely gives us limits within which the answer to our question as to the age of man will be found. The birth of the chosen ancestor of the Christ was not earlier than the birth of the eldest son in each generation, and it was not later than the death of the father. The lower of these limits is reached thus:—

Adam's age at birth of the eldest son of what may be called his second family . . . . .	130 years.
Seth's age at birth of his eldest son .	105 "
Enos's                   "                   "                   "	90 "
Cainan's               "               "               "	70 "
Mahalaleel's       "               "               "	65 "
Jared's               "               "               "	162 "
Enoch's               "               "               "	65 "
Methuselah's       "               "               "	187 "
Lamech's             "             "             "	182 "
<hr/>	
1056 years.	

This gives in all 1056 years as the lowest limit between the creation of man and the birth of Noah. Let us now see what that higher limit is beyond which—if there are no omitted generations—we cannot extend the

antiquity of the human race. We take, as before, the period during which each patriarch lived after the birth of his eldest son, and at some point in which the son named in the genealogy must have been born.

Adam lived after the birth of the				
eldest son of the second family				. 800 years.
Seth lived after birth of his eldest son	807	,,		
Enos	„	„	„	. 815 „
Cainan	„	„	„	. 840 „
Mahalaleel	„	„	„	. 830 „
Jared	„	„	„	. 800 „
Enoch	„	„	„	. 300 „
Methuselah	„	„	„	. 782 „
Lamech	„	„	„	. 595 „
				<hr/> 6569 years.

Thus we have in all 6569 years for this limit, beyond which we cannot go. We now find the mean of these two limits by adding the figures together and dividing by 2.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1056 \\
 6569 \\
 \hline
 2 \overline{) 7625} \\
 \hline
 3812
 \end{array}$$

This gives us 3812 years as the probable

interval between the creation of Adam and the birth of Noah. A few steps more will lead us to the dates we seek.

From the creation of Adam to the	
birth of Noah . . . . .	3812 years.
Noah's age at the termination of the	
Deluge . . . . .	601 „
From the Deluge to the birth of	
Christ . . . . .	3754 „
	<hr/>
	8167 years.

Thus the probable date of the creation of man is 8167 B.C. If to this we add the present year of grace, 1904, we have

$$\begin{array}{r} 8167 \\ 1904 \\ \hline 10,071 \end{array}$$

10,071 years as the probable duration of human life upon the earth.

My task is done. It is too much to expect that any single labourer can have gathered all that is to be gleaned in such a field as this. But one thing is clear. The old chronology must be discarded. Those distinct statements

of Scripture (to have directed fresh attention to which is the writer's only claim) absolutely forbid the reinstatement of Ussher's, or of any other of the numerous divergent systems of Biblical, chronology. It is equally clear that, while the Scripture has not given us mere chronology, it has laid down distinct chronological limits within which the dates which we desire to ascertain must be sought. And, if the margin of uncertainty which is left should distress us, let us thank God that this seeming defect emphasises for us what is the foundation of all saving knowledge—the representative character of Christ. It is the shadow cast, so to speak, by the Divine prophecy and pledge of the salvation for which all creation cries—of the coming of that morning without clouds when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon this dark and weary earth with healing under His wings.





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Urquhart, John

How old is man?

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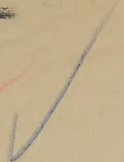
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